

South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership – Strategic Action Group on Transport (SAGT)

DRAFT Revised Terms of Reference – V3

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The Regional Economic Partnership (REP) has identified improving the region's transport connectivity as key to unlocking the economic, social and environment ambitions for the region. It has agreed that transport should be one of the three 'grand challenges' that the REP should focus on over the next two years, along with housing and skills.

2 AREAS OF FOCUS

2.1 The South of Scotland Strategic Action Group on transport (SAGT) recognises the special significance of sustainable transport connectivity as a vital means to achieve economic and social prosperity in the South.

2.2 The SAGT provides a collaborative, cross sector and dynamic approach aimed at influencing policy and unlocking disproportionate investment towards transport priorities in the South.

2.3 The SAGT will not be involved in delivery, but rather in influencing policy and supporting council officers and agencies already engaged in delivery.

2.4 Reflecting on areas of challenge for the region – including concern about historic underinvestment in transport infrastructure in the region, the fact that national assessments don't properly recognise the potential of projects in the South, and that the transport offer is weaker than in other areas – the Strategic Action Group on Transport will:

- ensure collective understanding between members of what a successful, multi-modal, transport network looks like in the South.
- influence policy and cement broad, political support (UK and Scottish Governments) for greater investment in key transport priorities and strategic projects in the South.
- seek to influence regional and national partners on transport issues faced in the South, including the Scottish and UK Governments and their agencies;
- highlight and target where current policy assessment methods (i.e. STAG appraisal) and legislation present barriers to regional ambitions;
- provide a strategic forum to agree collective messaging on issues and priorities for transport connectivity in the South, built around consensus on a clear vision for what success looks like;
- support council officers to identify and exploit key opportunities to enable the development of a sustainable, inclusive, safe, accessible and integrated transport network in the South;

- support capacity building efforts to expedite strategic transport development in the South and ensure key players involved in strategic development, delivery and service provision have the resources they need to deliver successful transport connectivity in the South.
- support council officers to strengthen the evidence base and case for investment through a well-resourced, data-led approach;
- highlight opportunities for greater strategic integration across regional partners and build connections with adjoining transport partnerships north and south of the border;
- support the development of the skills base required to support a shift to a sustainable transport system in the South.
- lever in transport investment from current and future growth deals (i.e. Borderlands and LUF) for the region;
- Exploit opportunities afforded by national goals for a Just Transition to Net Zero
- Ensure that benefits of transport investment impact people in the South equitably.

2.5 Shaped by these areas of focus, **Annex A** sets out two overarching priorities and associated outcomes for the Group. In summary, these are:

- make the case for transport investment seeking increased targeted funding to address rural challenges that unlock economic opportunities across the South of Scotland to contribute to a fairer, thriving, low carbon society;
- ensure a strong evidence and data-led approach;

3. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

3.1 The SAGT will:

- aim to not duplicate existing work, nor to go down dead ends. Instead, it will focus on workable actions that add value to existing structures and will act where collaborative working will create additionality and results;
- appoint joint rolling chairs (councillors from each local authority will share the role);
- adopt a 'Task and Finish' approach – focussed on making progress against its aims and ultimately a tangible difference, meeting as often as required;
- be an agile and flexible group in their scope and be subject to continual review;
- take account of key national, regional and local policy (i.e. NTS2, RTSs, LTPs and RES);
- co-develop consultation responses to relevant policy – where beneficial;
- not be confined to REP Members – recognising a need to draw expertise and perhaps oversee more focussed subgroupings or roundtables;

- engage paid-for external support where necessary;
- meet every eight weeks (or more often as required)
- the SAGT will be supported by officers to help drive progress, but REP members will be key to driving the work forward – organisations will be expected to support the work of the SAGT and agree to release their experts and others to participate where necessary;
- report back to the wider REP (and beyond as appropriate) – but should not let reporting hinder the Group’s getting on with their work and making the progress required.

4. SECRETARIAT

4.1 The REP Secretariat will assist with meeting planning and note taking. An officer group from across partners will support the work of SAGT but members of the group will be key to delivering actions.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Name	
Cllr Jenny Linehan	SBC - joint chair, 1 st year - 2024
Cllr Gail Macgregor	Leader, DGC - joint chair, 2 nd year - 2025

SoS REP	Membership is open to all REP members. Membership to be confirmed at 1 st SAGT meeting.
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Additional expertise	The SAGT chair may wish to call in additional expertise outside of the REP to form part of the SAGT membership or to take part in time limited sub groups and round tables.
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ANNEX A – KEY AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Identified Priorities and Outcomes

- **Make the case for transport investment seeking increased targeted funding to address rural challenges that unlock economic opportunities across the South of Scotland to contribute to a fairer, thriving, low carbon society;**

Scope: With a focus on fairness and equity, influence national transport assessment; strengthen the case to support an increase in cross-region investment in transport including identified strategic projects.

Purpose & Outcomes:

- a) Ensure a coordinated approach to development of a strong narrative around the need for transport investment in the South that aims to influence national policy and inform future strategic business cases.
- b) Encourage joint working on coordinated influencing activity upon UK and Scottish Governments to support strategic transport projects in the South and create an enabling legislative & policy environment for progress.
- c) Work towards a collective voice with businesses and communities in the region to amplify the strategic case for investment.

- **Ensure a strong evidence and data-led approach;**

Scope: Identification and (where resources allow) collection of data sets that support the case for transport investment in the South and enable progress with development.

Purpose & Outcomes:

- a) Strengthen the collective understanding of data available to REP partners, building partnerships with agencies and forums that curate relevant datasets.
- b) To identify and address gaps in data required to realise success (i.e. regional emissions, investment, access to transport & transport poverty, regional mode share, consumer satisfaction).